



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
P.O. Box 45040, Olympia, Washington 98504-5040
May 1, 2012

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Dear Washington State Foster Parents:

Governor Christine Gregoire has proclaimed May as Foster Care Month in Washington State to recognize your commitment to ensuring our children have safe, quality, temporary families when they cannot safely remain in their own homes.

I am pleased to celebrate national Foster Parent Month with you once again. May is the month we pay tribute across the nation to foster parents and their dedication to children who must temporarily live away from their families due to abuse and neglect.

My parents became foster parents when I was 11 years old. Over the years, I personally witnessed the hard work, love, and positive commitments made by families for neglected and abused children. I have never forgotten those experiences throughout my career in child welfare. Foster families change lives for the better, and thousands of young people in Washington live better lives today because of your selfless efforts. Words cannot adequately express how valuable your work is to our children, to Children's Administration (CA), and to the people of the state of Washington.

Children's Administration has worked diligently to support foster parents. I am pleased to report the progress we have made together in the past year:

- 1) CA social workers completed 95% of their monthly visits with children in foster care in 2011.
- 2) The 2011 Foster Parent Survey reports 79.2% of foster parents are satisfied with their interactions with CA staff. This is the highest rating since the survey began in 2007.
- 3) The Foster Parent Consultation Teams continue to meet quarterly to collaborate on improvements to foster parent recruitment, retention, training and other support services.
- 4) We continue to improve our timelines in providing caregivers timely notification about court dates and their right to be heard at the hearings.
- 5) The Caregiver Report to the Court form is now available in each CA office and on line, to assist you in sharing information about the child for each court hearing.
- 6) A new forms page is now available on the CA foster parent web site to help foster parents access the forms you use most.
- 7) The Foster Parent Listserv now serves 4,900 caregivers. This helps us provide information to you quickly.

- 8) We have entered into a partnership with University of Washington and Eastern Washington University to improve and enhance training and professional development for social workers and foster and adoptive parents across the state.

I welcome your feedback and suggestions on what you need as you care for the children placed in your families. Please let me know if you have suggestions that may improve our partnership as we work together to meet the needs of the children in our care.

Thank you for sharing your heart and your home with children who need out of home placement. Your daily devotion on behalf of children changes lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Denise Revels Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Denise Revels Robinson, Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration